

Great Falls Montana
Social Media Management for Talent Attraction
Request for Proposals

Great Falls Development Authority, Inc.

July 12, 2021

I. INTRODUCTION

The Great Falls Development Authority, Inc. (GFDA) is seeking a firm(s) with extensive experience with social media production and management to manage the Live in Great Falls social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Local firms with an understanding of the Great Falls community and surrounding region are preferred, but we are open to all proposals.

We are approaching this project with a wide-open view of which creative messaging and social media marketing techniques will be most effective in attracting talent to Great Falls, Montana and increasing community engagement with our social media accounts and larger Live in Great Falls effort.

Interested firms are encouraged to discuss this RFP with us, as detailed below.

II. BACKGROUND

The Great Falls Development Authority is formed as a non-profit 501 (c) 3 governed by a 44-member board comprised of community partners and our private investors. We have a 16-person staff, having grown from 9 people four years ago. Our mission is to grow Great Falls, Montana. We assist with business planning, business expansions, project funding, brownfields, entrepreneurship and most recently, talent attraction.

Our EDO

GFDA is a regional public/private EDO which focuses its efforts on the 13-county Great Falls Montana trade area, also known as Montana's Golden Triangle. Great Falls Montana is a MSA with 86,000 population. Our trade area extends to the Canadian border, totaling about 209,000 population. We seek to generate business attraction leads for this entire metro/rural/tribal region.

Our EDO works on business attraction, business retention/expansion, business start-ups, and a wide range of efforts to make our region more competitive in attracting private investment and retaining/attracting talent. We are involved in downtown revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, workforce, infrastructure, and housing, amongst other things. We are a certified Community Development

Financial Institution (CDFI) that provides gap and bridge financing to businesses, start-up entrepreneurs, real estate developers, and non-profits. We host a Small Business Development Center (SBDC), a Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), and a Montana Food & Ag Development Center. We provide office space for a team member of the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center. We have an affiliate CDC which we staff, High Plains Financial, that we created to offer SBA 504 loans statewide. We are the developer of the Great Falls AgriTech Park, a BNSF-certified premier rail industrial park. Our newest initiative is talent attraction which we launched in January.

GFDA is the first EDO in the Rocky Mountain West to earn accreditation from the International Economic Development Council. As a private sector driven EDO, we have a culture of continuous improvement, experimentation, and organizational entrepreneurship. We are results driven with an emphasis on providing value to our clients.

We launched our talent attraction initiative in January 2020 with the goal of helping employers attract the high-quality talent they need to succeed. Working with local employers and local recruiters, we put together an evolving toolkit of resources to help attract talent to Great Falls. This includes the www.LiveinGreatFalls.com website, which includes a comprehensive overview of life in Great Falls, a cost of living calculator, and a news and lifestyle blog; the Great Falls Livability Magazine; talent attraction marketing videos; key messages; among others.

The purpose of these tools is to help employers attract talent from out of market by showcasing living and working in Great Falls, and social media is essential to this mission.

Target Markets

Given the scope of our talent attraction work, we have multiple markets we are targeting with our marketing efforts. Our target markets are Bozeman MT, Missoula MT, Billings MT, Denver-Colorado Springs CO, Seattle WA, Portland OR, and San Francisco CA and include:

- **Regionally Laid Off.** Job affected by the pandemic and willing to relocate for employment.
- **Boomerangs.** Talent with ties to Montana through family and friends. To showcase the ever-changing Great Falls market to individuals who grew up in the region, moved away for college or career, and are considering relocation to a community with a better work-life balance and cost-of-living than their current location.

- **Remote Workers.** Currently working remotely and desperate for new location. Capture them now, then sell them on Great Falls careers for themselves/partners.
- **Trade Workers/Aspiring Trade Workers.** Currently or considering working in skilled trades regionally.
- **Entrepreneurs.** Current or aspiring entrepreneur seeking lower cost markets. Entrepreneurs address the critical challenge of amenities (other Montana cities' advantage over Great Falls) and can bring partners, leading to job creation.
- **Unfamiliar Market.** To introduce the reality of living and working in the city of Great Falls, Montana. To show people who have no familiarity with Great Falls or Montana the benefits of what their life could be living and working in Central Montana. Highlight the advantages of living in our region, particularly amongst skilled people and present/future entrepreneurs, so that we can attract talent to relocate.
- **Local Market.** In addition to showcasing Great Falls to people unfamiliar or distanced from the city, we also want to showcase the awesome things going on in Great Falls to the people who already live here, and people who have recently relocated here, in order to foster a sense of community pride and excitement. The goal is that this will in turn increase public opinion of Great Falls so people who live here already become the primary promoters of the community.

Current Efforts on Social Media

We utilize three social media platforms to engage our community and share information about living and working in Great Falls. Most social media postings direct users to explore more on our talent attraction website, www.LiveinGreatfalls.com.

Instagram. We currently post twice a week on the Instagram timeline. We share high-quality photos, either curated from followers or from our collection of photography. We rarely utilize the Story and Reels features.

Facebook. We post three times/week on Facebook. Posts generally reflect content shared on Instagram, except with more text. More informational-type content is shared on Facebook than Instagram. We boost high-performing posts on occasion.

LinkedIn. We share content related to quality of life in Great Falls and career opportunities. Currently the most underutilized platform.

We have begun to produce in-house “Ask an Expert” videos that we want to publish weekly and will be shared widely on social media – these videos are made by the GFDA team; we do not expect the social media management firm to create these videos. We also produce content on the Live in Great Falls blog that is shared widely on social media.

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Live in Great Falls initiative is to grow the population of Great Falls by providing tools to local employers to help them attract talent from out-of-town and market Great Falls to workers and entrepreneurs who would consider moving here. The objective of the Live in Great Falls social media accounts is to get more people talking positively about Great Falls online and sharing their stories about living and working in the community.

Community engagement is the highest priority for GFDA’s FY22, and this priority carries over into our social media approach. We need practical social media campaigns that drive immediate, concrete results – such as more out-of-town resumes submitted, more employers contacted for open positions by people who live out-of-town, and/or people sharing their relocation stories on their accounts. Long-term “brand building” is secondary – our immediate mission is to grow the population and get employers the workers they need for current openings and future growth.

The objectives for a social media marketing firm to accomplish are as follows:

1. Develop effective social media campaigns.
 - a. Use creative marketing to develop social media campaigns that engage users to share their stories.
 - b. Utilize different features on each platform for highest engagement (Stories, Reels, etc.)
2. Engage employers and community.
 - a. We do not want to simply *share* great content – we want content that gets followers to act, both online and offline.
 - b. Engagement is our #1 theme for FY22, so getting employers and the community engaged with our mission to attract talent to Great Falls is highest priority.
3. Utilize partner content.
 - a. Share and re-post appropriate content from our community partners, including but not limited to: Great Falls Montana Tourism, Great Falls Development Authority (Grow Great Falls), Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, Great Falls Association of Realtors.
4. Least time spent by GFDA Staff.
 - a. GFDA Staff will review and approve social media content calendar monthly. We only have one team member working on talent attraction so seek a consultant who can manage our social media efforts in such a

way that as little time as possible is required from our staff. That being said, we envision working as a close-knit team over a long period of time.

We want posts to be seen by users in our target markets for talent attraction. We want people who have never heard of Great Falls to know about it and take concrete steps at exploring it as a place to live, and we want people who used to live here to consider it as a place to relocate.

V. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected firm will manage Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn platforms for Live in Great Falls accounts for a twelve (12) month period. We define “manage” as curating and creating post content and content calendars, coming up with creative campaign ideas, scheduling/posting content, boosting and advertising posts on each account, and analyzing success of regular posts and boosted posts on a weekly/monthly basis. GFDA can help arrange for local people to be subjects of posts and will approve all posts in a content calendar bi-weekly or monthly, ahead of scheduling.

The scope of work for the selected firm is as follows:

1. Campaign plans.
 - a. Develop creative campaigns to get people engaged with Live in Great Falls.
2. Content creation.
3. Post and boost content.
 - a. Use an online scheduler such as Later to schedule approved posts on platforms.
 - b. Boost posts, segmenting messaging as needed to different target markets.
4. Analyze results from posts.
 - a. Analyze engagement/likes/follows/boost success on each platform and monitor monthly for growth.

We don't know how to best accomplish this mission – we are open to suggestions; if you have ideas, we want to hear them!

Please detail a recommended scope of services and base your cost proposal on this scope of work. We anticipate beginning services on or shortly after September 1, 2021. Contract extensions for future years are dependent on the successful work of the chosen consultant.

VI. WHY CONSULTANTS SHOULD RESPOND

We are small, aggressive organization open to your most creative ideas – we know where we want to go but are looking for the best firm to drive us there. We are looking to a firm to take over the Live in Great Falls accounts and really make them stand out among the competition – our only expectation is success. But we also understand that sometime success comes only after trying multiple things and seeing what works – we’re open to that!

We know money matters and interested firms should know that our budget has the potential to grow in following years *if* we produce concrete results that actively help local employers attract talent to Great Falls and get people talking positively about Great Falls online. Talent attraction is an incredibly high priority for our organization right now, and we project that it will continue to grow in priority in the coming years.

The Great Falls Development Authority has over 120 businesses and organizations as investors and is governed by a board of directors that includes over 40 prominent Great Falls businesses and organizations.

VII. CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

We seek firm(s) that have successful experience in producing high-quality and creative social media content. Our dream respondent(s) would have:

- 1) Proven experience in producing highly unique and creative social media campaigns and posts for communities with a talent attraction/population growth mindset.
- 2) Proven experience in creating social media content that produces concrete results offline;
- 3) Ability and interest in developing a long-term working relationship with GFDA staff;
- 4) Excellent reputation amongst current and previous clients.

VIII. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

An electronic copy of the proposal should be submitted in PDF format by email, Dropbox or other electronic file sharing method by 5:00 PM MST on Wednesday, August 4, 2021 to:

Soren Chargois Ebbasi
Soren@GrowGreatFalls.org

We discourage the submittal of printed materials. We welcome inclusion of online URLs that would allow us to view past work.

The submittal should follow the order below and include, at a minimum the following information:

- A cover letter signed and dated by the person or an authorized representative of the firm making the submittal.
- A brief statement of your firm's understanding of the goals of this effort and of the services requested in this RFP.
- A brief statement of the history of your team, including relevant projects.
- A brief statement of what your firm does best, or different, in comparison to other firms.
- A brief statement explaining the methodology your firm uses to manage social media marketing campaigns.
- Qualifications of key individuals to be assigned to this project, their availability during the relevant time periods, and their recent experience on similar projects.
- Examples of past work that demonstrate the return on investment produced for similar clients.
- Price for scope of work.

IX. PRICE

The consultant will present a budget based on the Scope of Work and Objectives of the RFP. While price is a consideration, our assessment of the potential return on investment will be a higher determinant in the selection of firm(s). Respondents should take into consideration within their proposed prices the amount of staff time GFDA will need to dedicate to approving social media posts, making introductions or helping find people to be featured in posts, and other necessary work.

For our FY 2022 fiscal year (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022), we have budgeted \$56,000 for talent attraction social media. This is currently broken down as \$20,000 for consultant services and \$36,000 (\$3,000/month) paid social media advertising and boosting posts, however, this breakdown is flexible. Impact is our primary driver.

X. FIRM SELECTION

Firms that respond to this RFP will be evaluated and ranked. This evaluation will be based on the submitted proposals and, at the discretion of the Committee, on interviews with those consultants who appear to be particularly well-qualified, as determined from their written proposals.

The consultants will be evaluated and ranked in accordance with the following factors, which are weighted as shown:

- The consultant's experience with similar projects (20%)

- The breadth of the consultant’s experience, including the qualifications and availability of the key personnel who would be assigned (20%)
- The methodology and scope of services to be provided (30%)
- Proven ability from examples and explanations provided that the firm can produce high-quality, innovative and unconventional social media management that will increase public awareness of the Great Falls, Montana community and of the Live in Great Falls initiative (30%)

Negotiations will commence with the highest ranked firm(s). Upon reaching agreement on a final work plan and price, the Great Falls Development Authority will award the contract(s). If agreement cannot be reached with the highest ranked consultant(s), negotiations may proceed with lower ranked consultant(s).

XI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & CONDITIONS

A. STATEMENT OF NONCOMMITMENT

Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Great Falls Development Authority, Inc. to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in preparation of proposals responding to the RFP. The GFDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and re-advertise. All proposals become the property of the GFDA.

B. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Successful contract bidders must comply with provisions of all applicable federal law, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any subcontracting by the successful bidder subjects subcontracting firm(s) to the same provisions of federal law.

In accordance with state and federal requirements, the consultant (hereinafter referred to as “contractor”) must agree as follows:

1.) COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 FOR FEDERAL AID CONTRACTS

(a) Compliance with Regulations. The Contractor shall comply with all Regulations relative to nondiscrimination in Federally-assisted programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 24 CFR Part 1, as they may be amended (hereafter referred to as the Regulations), which are incorporated by reference and made part of this Agreement.

(b) Nondiscrimination. The Contractor, with regard to the work performed by it during the Agreement, shall not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, color or national origin in the selection and retention of subcontractors, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment. The Contractor shall not participate either directly or indirectly in the discrimination prohibited in 24CFR Part 21.

(c) Solicitations for Subcontractors, Including Procurements of Materials and Equipment. In all solicitations, whether by competitive bidding or negotiation by the Contractor for work to be performed under a subcontract, including procurements of materials or leases of equipment, any potential subcontractor or supplier shall be notified by the Contractor of the Contractor's obligations under this Agreement and the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination.

(d) Sanctions for Noncompliance. In the event of the contractor's noncompliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of this Agreement, GFDA may impose sanctions as it determines appropriate, including, but not limited to withholding payments to the Contractor under the Agreement until the Contractor complies, and/or cancellation, termination or suspension of the agreement in whole or in part.

2) COMPLIANCE WITH THE MONTANA GOVERNMENTAL CODE OF FAIR PRACTICES, 49-3-207. MCA

In accordance with 49-3-207, MCA, the Contractor agrees that for this agreement all hiring will be made on the basis of merit and qualifications and that there will be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, political ideas, sex, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, or national origin by persons performing the Agreement.

3) COMPLIANCE WITH MINORITY & WOMEN BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

Contractor will make efforts to encourage the use of minority and women's business enterprises in connection with Agreements activities in accordance with 24 CFR Part 85.36(e) which describes the actions to ensure that minority and women's business enterprises are used when possible in the procurement of property and services.

C. VENUE

The laws of the State of Montana govern this contract. The parties agree that any litigation concerning bid, proposal, or subsequent contract must be brought in the Eighth Judicial District of Cascade County, State of Montana and each party shall pay its own costs and attorney fees. (Reference 18-1-401 MCA)

D. INSURANCE

Certificates of Insurance, indicating compliance with the required overage, must be filed with the Great Falls Development Authority within ten (10) working days of the Notice of Award. The proof of insurance/exemption must be valid for the entire contract period.

E. RFP AUTHORITY

This RFP has been issued in accordance with Title 18, Montana Code Annotated and the Administrative Rules of Montana, Title 2, Chapter 5. The RFP process is a

procurement option, allowing award to be based on stated criteria or evaluation factors. The evaluation factors to be used in this procurement have been specified in this RFP.

F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information regarding this RFP, please contact:

Soren Chargois Ebbasi
Talent Attraction Director
(406) 836-0147
Soren@GrowGreatFalls.org